

8. Preservation

Strongly encourages a written preservation policy, discusses establishing preservation priorities, rare and endangered publications, and preservation review and preservation processes.

What's New and Important

- ❖ The need for a written preservation policy

Preservation Policy

Each depository library is entrusted with the custody of depository materials and must ensure they are properly preserved. As a minimum standard for the care and maintenance of depository property, their maintenance should be no less than that given to commercially purchased publications.

While preservation of tangible material is a responsibility of the regional Federal depository libraries, each depository library should consider developing policies and practices that provide for the maintenance and continued accessibility of their depository collections. To assist in this process, each library is strongly encouraged to prepare a written preservation policy. While the specific elements of the policy will vary according to the age, extent of the collection, and the library's collection development policy, it should include, at minimum

- ❖ An articulation of preservation priorities
- ❖ Methods for a systematic review of preservation needs

Preservation Priorities

Since all libraries have limited funds and staff, priorities should be established for the allocation of available monetary and personnel resources. Preservation priorities balance

the importance of the material to an individual collection, with the risk factors inherent to particular types of material, or attendant to their use.

Some of the factors that should be considered in assigning priorities are

- ❖ Artifactual value
- ❖ Past and potential use
- ❖ Availability in other libraries
- ❖ Physical condition
- ❖ Suitability and availability of alternative formats
- ❖ Cost effectiveness of preservation activities

Preservation priorities should be consistent with broader collection development priorities, as outlined in the library's written collection development policy [\(insert link to appropriate section of Chapter 5\)](#). It may be that no preservation treatment (planned deterioration) is the most realistic option.

Rare and Endangered Publications

A particularly important consideration is the artifactual value of material. Some publications are rare, some are valuable, and some are both rare and valuable. It is a challenge to depository coordinators first to identify these materials and second to preserve them from damage and loss.

Identification of valuable publications takes time and effort. While there are no quick lists, there are several starting places. First, give special consideration to materials pertaining to your own state or locale. If you can encapsulate only a few maps, select those of your own state. Select reports and other volumes on the same basis; and don't forget small circulars, etc. as they are the most likely to be lost over the years.

The Library of Congress designates anything published prior to 1801 as material to be cataloged as rare books. If you own material published prior to that date you should consider placing them in your rare book or special collections. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Rare Books and Manuscripts (RBMS) Ad Hoc Committee for Developing Transfer Guidelines published their recommendations in "Guidelines on the Selection of General Collection Materials for Transfer to Special Collections," *College and Research Libraries News*, no. 46, July/August 1985, pages 349-352. These will be helpful in determining what should be removed from the regular collection.

For anything published after 1801 and up to 1909, the most practical approach is to take the 1909 *Checklist (Checklist of United States Public Documents, 1789-1909*. Washington, GPO, 1911) and assume that any publication in a library's collection that is also in the *Checklist* is worthy of further consideration.

This recommendation is made for several reasons. First, the National Archives does not own those publications indicated in the *Checklist* by an asterisk (* not in the Public Documents Library). A library owning such a publication should protect it. Second, a commercial vendor searching for copies of non-*Serial Set* materials in the 1909 *Checklist* for a microfiche project has been unable to locate copies of many publications, particularly leaflets, regulations, and circulars. If you have any, they may be rare. Third, the material in the latter half of the *Checklist*, from the 1860's on, was published during a period when the paper manufacturing process left residual acids, causing the paper to become brittle and disintegrate, a condition contributing to the increasing scarcity of these publications. The cost of replacement with microform products is very high and the reproduction may not always be as legible as the original.

Finally, there is the inherent or intrinsic value of these publications as primary records of the history of our nation and governmental processes. Intrinsic value refers to the qualities or characteristics that make the original record have permanent value. These can be:

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Aesthetic or artistic quality (having maps, plates, photographs, etc.)
- ❖ Value for use in exhibits (in some way the original has greater impact than a copy)
- ❖ General and substantial public interest because of direct association with significant people, places, things, issues or events
- ❖ Significance as documentation for the legal basis of institutions or formulation of policy at the highest executive level

Several Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) classification numbers in the *Checklist* can be immediately targeted for special consideration, either as transfer items or conservation projects that might place them in special boxes, etc. Anything in the Z section covering the first fourteen Congresses should be considered rare and valuable. Other sections are:

- ❖ N 1.8: Explorations and surveys
- ❖ S 6: International exhibitions and expositions
- ❖ W 7.5: Explorations and surveys
- ❖ W 7.14: Explorations and surveys for the railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean

Many of these reports also appear in the *Serial Set*. Several bibliographies compiled by Adelaide R. Hasse covering these and other SuDocs numbers can be very helpful and are listed in the bibliography at the end of this chapter.

Using categories is another way of searching for important and valuable publications. Many famous scientists began their significant work with reports they wrote for the early exploring expeditions. The category of scientific and technical discoveries goes right into the twentieth century. The patent papers of Thomas Edison, the Manhattan Project, and nuclear energy publications in the 1950's will require preservation for future generations. U.S. Geological Survey publications describing the discovery of natural resources or phenomena such as major earthquakes within the continental U.S. are important. Political events such as the McCarthy hearings and controversial reports such as the Kennedy assassination are candidates for preservation.

Another approach to evaluate your collection for preservation purposes is to examine the categories of publications that libraries are requesting be printed on permanent/alkaline paper. Under the ANSI standard, government-sponsored research studies, almanacs, census data, and survey maps qualify.

Because of their legal importance, additional categories were recommended in an article, "Why GPO should use alkaline paper," *Documents to the People*, vol. 16, no. 1, March 1988, pp. 38-41. This article includes publications mandated by law, annual reports, legislative history sources (House and Senate hearings, reports and documents), permanent cumulations of judicial, legislative or administrative decisions, orders and opinions, rules and regulations; yearbooks and annual statistical reports, treaty series, advisory committee reports, proceedings of conferences, institutes and advisory boards; and reports, decisions, and conferences concerning domestic and international arbitration.

Preservation Review

The goal of a preservation review program is to identify at-risk materials and to ensure that that these materials remain available to the public. This is best accomplished by making preservation assessment part of the life cycle of a library's depository collection.

The earliest opportunity for the evaluation of at-risk materials is upon receipt, or during initial processing or cataloging. Materials can also be assessed following use, at circulation and reserve service points, and as part of the re-shelving process. Finally, for collections that emphasize currency over historical scope, assessment can occur as part of the weeding and disposal process ([insert link to Chapter 12](#)).

Integrating preservation review into established library processes allows fragile materials to be identified and stabilized before damage occurs, and already damaged materials to be evaluated for possible treatment.

Preservation Processes

Preservation activities include processes related to the storage and handling of particular types of materials, and the treatment of materials found to be at risk. Treatment options include

- ❖ Preservation of materials in their original format

- ❖ Preservation of the intellectual content of material by reformatting
- ❖ No preservation treatment (planned deterioration)

The approach taken will depend upon the preservation priorities established in the written preservation policy, and the risk factors associated with particular types of material.

For information on storage, handling and treatment of various types of depository materials, [see chapter 9 \(link\)](#).

Tips, Practical Advice, and Lessons Learned

- ❖ Integrating preservation review into established library processes allows fragile materials to be identified and stabilized before damage occurs, and damaged materials to be rapidly evaluated for possible treatment.
- ❖ Preservation plans should dovetail with the [collection development policy \(link to chapter 5\)](#) and the [disaster recovery plan \(link to chapter 14\)](#).
- ❖ The preservation policy should be realistic and practical. It should focus on steps that can be accomplished with existing or obtainable resources.
- ❖ Work with the library's rare book or special collections department to safeguard and preserve any rare and valuable government publications.
- ❖ There are some steps that will help to extend the life of depository material without a budget increase.
 - Train staff and users in the care and proper handling of all material.
 - Carry out systematic stack maintenance.
 - Prepare a [disaster plan \(link to chapter 14\)](#).
 - Follow preservation criteria when purchasing storage furniture and supplies.
 - Work with the library's facilities management staff to stabilize temperature and humidity levels.

Did you realize that you don't have to?

- ❖ *Preserve everything in perpetuity if your library is a selective depository.* Preservation priorities should be consistent with library resources and broader collection development priorities. It may be that no preservation treatment (planned deterioration or deaccession) is the most realistic option.

Important for Library Administrators

- ❖ Depository libraries are required to maintain depository material at the same level as commercially purchased publications.

- ❖ Preservation of tangible U.S. Government publications distributed through the FDLDP is one of the responsibilities of a regional depository library.
- ❖ A written preservation policy is the key to an effective preservation program.

Additional Resources

Tools for Identifying Rare and Valuable Government Publications

Haskell, Daniel Carl. *The United States Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842, and Its Publications, 1838-1874: A Bibliography*. New York: New York Public Library, 1942.

Hasse, Adelaide R. *Bibliography of United States Public Documents Relating to Interoceanic Communications, Nicaragua, Isthmus of Panama, Isthmus of Tehuantepec, etc.* Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1899.

Hasse, Adelaide R. *Index to United States Documents Relating to Foreign Affairs, 1828-1861* (Publication 185, pts. 1-3). Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Hasse, Adelaide R., comp. *Reports of Explorations Printed in the Documents of the United States Government: A Contribution Toward a Bibliography*. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1899.

Heisser, David. "Federal Documents as Rare Books." *Documents to the People* 16, no. 4, (1988) : 176-178.

Moffett, William A., ed. *The Shinn Lists*. Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1982. (This is the list of materials prepared from the accumulated card file of an accomplished book thief.)

Pestana, Harold R. *Bibliography of Congressional Geology*. New York: Hafner, 1972.

Poore, Benjamin Perley. *Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Publications of the United States, Sept. 5, 1774-March 4, 1881*. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1885. (48th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Miscellaneous Document 67) (Serial Set vol. 2268). Also reprinted editions.

Seavey, Charles A. "Bibliographic Addendum to Carl Wheat's Mapping the Transmississippi West." *Special Library Association, Geography and Map Division. Bulletin* 105 (Sept. 1976) : 12-19.

Seavey, Charles A. "Locating Illustrated Federal Publications from the Pre-GPO Period Using the 1909 Checklist." *Documents to the People* 17, no. 3 (September 1989) : 130.

Seavey, Charles A. "Maps of the American State Papers." *Special Libraries Association, Geography and Map Division. Bulletin* 107 (Mar. 1977) : 28-33, and 110 (Dec. 1977) : 3-11.

Seavey, Charles A. "Wheat to Serial Set Conversion." *Special Libraries Association, Geography and Map Division. Bulletin* 108 (June 1977) : 37-40.

Shaw, Ralph R. *American Bibliography, a Preliminary Checklist for 1801-1819*. New York: Scarecrow, 1958-66.

Shoemaker, Richard H. *A Checklist of American Imprints 1820-1829*. New York: Scarecrow, 1964-71. Title index for 1820-1928 by Cooper, M. Frances... Followed by 1830, Cooper, Gayle; 1831, Bruntjen, Scott and Carol Bruntjen; and 1830-1839, Rinderknecht, Carol (also title index).

United States. Dept. of the Interior. Division of Documents. *Comprehensive Index to the Publications of the United States Government, 1881-1893*, by John G. Ames. Washington, D.C. : G.P.O., 1905.

Wagner, Henry Raup. *The Plains and the Rockies: A Critical Bibliography of Exploration, Adventure, and Travel in the American West, 1800-1865*. Various editions.

Wheat, Carl. *Mapping the Trans-Mississippi West, 1540-1861*. San Francisco: Institute of Historical Cartography, 1957-1963.

Wondriska, Rebecca. "Women and the American Dream, 1900-1925." *Government Publications Review* 17, no. 2 (March/April 1990) : 143-157. Although this goes beyond the 1909 Checklist, it is an approach to be followed developing a list for a special interest subject.

Preservation of Tangible Material

The [Northeast Documents Conservation Center](http://www.nedcc.org/) has many resources on the care and preservation of tangible publications. (<http://www.nedcc.org/>)

Preservation of Tangible Electronic Material

Byers, Fred R. "[Care and Handling of CDs and DVDs: A Guide for Librarians and Archivists](#)" Council on Library and Information Resources, 2003. <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub121/pub121.pdf> (accessed 22 August 2005).

Federal Depository Library Program, "[Depository Library Public Service Guidelines for Government Information in Electronic Formats.](#)", (Washington, D.C.: FDLP, n.d.), http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/mgt/pseguide.html (accessed 22 August 2005).

Federal Depository Library Program. "[2003 Minimum Technical Requirements for Public Access Workstations in Federal Depository Libraries.](#)" (Washington, D.C.: FDLP, n.d.) http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/computers/mtr.html (accessed 22 August 2005).

Herter, Nancy K. "CD-ROM in Libraries." *Online*, May/June 1995, 109. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO.

Landau, Herbert B. "Microform vs. CD-ROM: Is There a Difference?" *The Forum, Library Journal*, 1 October 1990, 56. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO.

Manns, Basil and Chandru J. Shahani. "[Longevity of CD Media. Research at the Library of Congress](#)." (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2003).
<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/studyofCDlongevity.pdf> (accessed 22 August 2005).

"[Nonprint Media Update: Longevity and Optical Media](#)." *DTIC Digest* 2001, no. 1(January 2001), <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/digest/digest2001-1/Nonprintmed.html> (accessed March 7, 2006).

Poor, Alfred. "Hardware." *PC Magazine*, 16 May 1995, 293. MasterFILE Premier. EBSCO.